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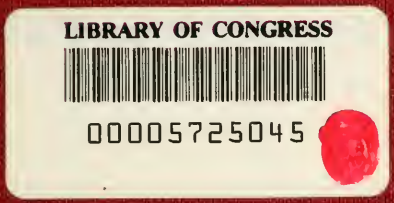

Mount Vernon

The Home of Washington

By J. E. JONES

U. S. Press Association
Washington, D. C.
MCMXV

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Washington, D. C.

APR -9 1915

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Boston

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"The sweet abiding peace
of Mount Vernon—"

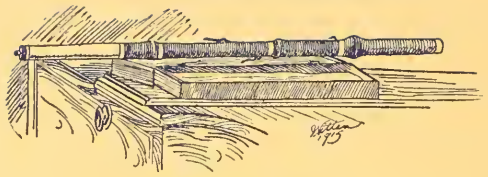
"The sweet abiding peace
of Mount Vernon—"

THIS volume contains a little narrative of impressions brought away from that tranquil spot on the Potomac where lived our beloved George and Martha Washington. Buff and blue were predominant colonial colors, and they have been utilized in creating this book to emphasize the telling and picturing of the story—a story much the same as anyone might relate after the fires of their patriotism had been rekindled at the shrine of Mount Vernon.

Boat Landing at Mount Vernon

ENSIVE and retrospective, my feelings when visiting Mount Vernon have been much the same as those of a great many other people, and though I have been there time and again, an intangible something bids me to return—it is the magnet, I merely the needle.

The sweet abiding peace of Mount Vernon is a fitting reminder that, though the master of the place has been dead for more than a century, his achievements are still fondly remembered by his



Washington's Flute

countrymen. A nation that will always endearingly call him the "Father of His Country," now sends its pilgrims to Mount Vernon, and they travel along the paths that Washington planned, or about the grounds he loved, and they return to tell you that they experienced an unusual contentment which they had never felt before. Familiarity with these scenes appears to intensify the romance and sanctity

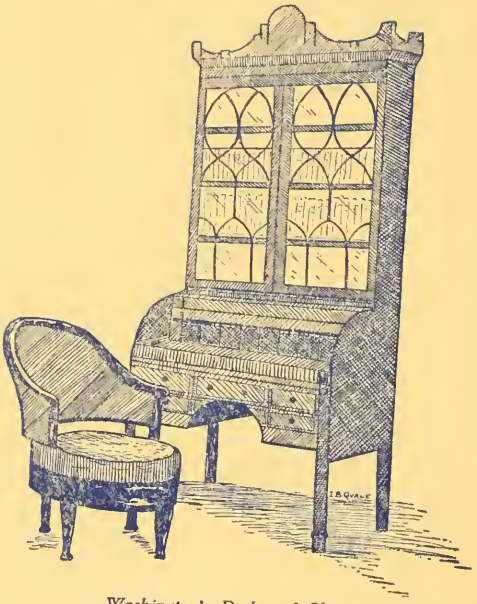
"About the grounds he loved—"

"About the grounds he
loved—"

that hover about the House of Washington.

I believe in the advice: "See everything once," and I have put it into practice. Many good things worth seeing once are worth seeing twice, and occasionally things worth seeing twice will stand still another inspection. But go as many times as you wish, and you will always feel an inexplicable serenity and peace when you pass within the gates of Mount Vernon.

It is a steep climb up from the dock to the buildings. Besides the old colonial mansion, there is the spinning house, where much material



Washington's Desk and Chair

was prepared for clothing the servants, and where rag carpets and other fabrics were woven for the use of the family. Flax, cotton, wool and silk were put through the various processes. A duplicate of the family coach is a relic of the place that remains in the old coach house. Close by one comes on to the office, stables, smoke house, laundry, butler's house, carpenter

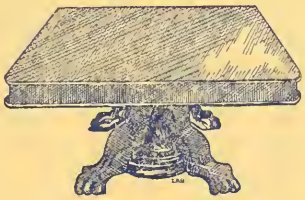
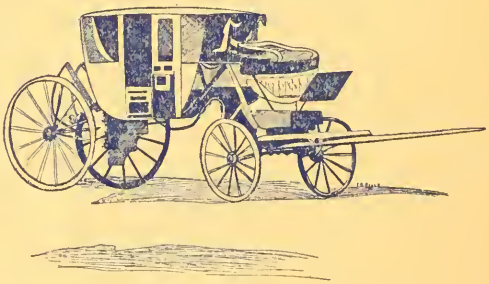


Table in Banquet Hall

shop, ice house, seed house, gardener's lodge and the servants' quarters, all of which, except the stables and quarters, are painted spotlessly white.

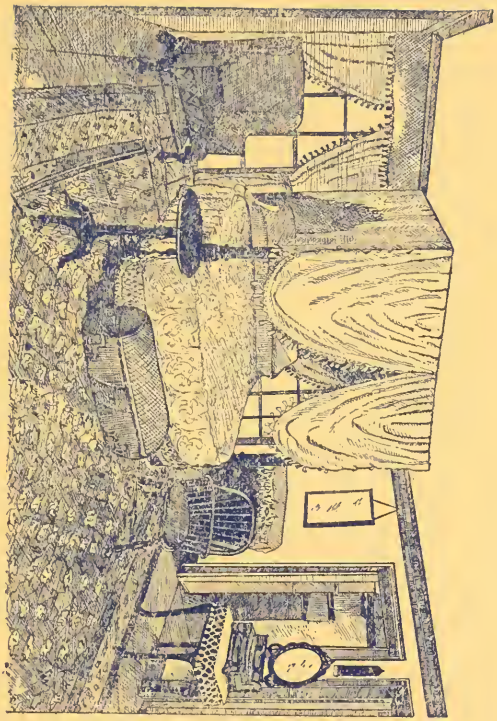
Nature has done a great deal for the scene, and from the Virginia hill the outlook up the Potomac, and across the broad river on the Mary-



Colonial Stage Coach

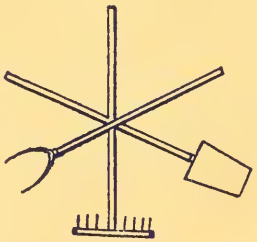
The Stuart Portrait

The Stuart Portrait



"Voices hush . . . before a chamber door"

land shore, where was located and is still preserved Marshall Hall, the country place of John Henson Marshall, is all in harmony with the simple grandeur that surrounds the spot where lived George and Martha Washington. But withal, the associations are what lend the intense interest and affection that attaches to the place, for had Mount Vernon been any-



Ceiling Design by Washington

thing else but the home of Washington it might pass simply as a "nice old country place."

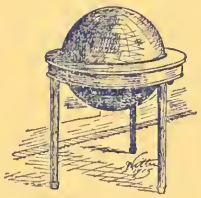
I can recall a thousand big sights and experiences of first magnitude, and in our own domain they include the Maine woods, the roaring Niagara, the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains; dips in the Atlantic, the Pacific, Lake Superior and the Gulf of Mexico; a train ride through the Culebra cut and a walk across the locks at Gatun; stalking deer in the forests, whipping the trout streams in the Middle West and hauling in the lines while deep-sea fishing off Cape Cod

or pulling salmon from Lake Sebago. And then there has been the laughter and gaiety of the "Great White Way," and long years of life in the cities since I forsook my country newspaper and the

"There are four swords"

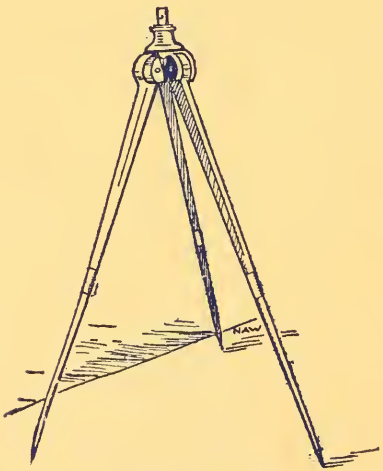
charms of life among the best friends I shall ever know. Lastly, there is Washington, my home—a great kaleidoscopic affair, a perpetual show and museum, always filled with life and interest. In my own way I can harmonize all these, and they are integral parts of what might be termed the "scheme of things."

But Mount Vernon furnishes a singular contrast to



"Old maps of the world"

all else, for it has its individual and peculiar way of sending thrills through one's system—it bids you pause in contemplation. Perhaps you murmur a silent prayer as you eagerly lean forward to



Surveyor's Tripod Used by Washington

Washington's State Sword

behold the caskets within the tomb that contains all that is mortal of George and Martha Washington. And you are proud of the patriotic sensations you feel in the knowledge that you are an American and are standing before your country's greatest shrine.

At the well where Washington quenched his thirst from a gourd, you use a modern sanitary cup, and drink the nectar supplied from Mother Earth. In the Mansion itself you marvel

"Nature has done a great deal for this scene"

Horadon Bust

Drawing by W. A. Witten

Houdon Bust
Drawing by N. A. Witten

before the relics and mementos of the Washington family, and almost unconsciously exclaim: "Wonderful!" There are four swords, three of which Washington presented to his nephews with the injunction, not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except it be in self-defence or in defence of their country and its rights, and in the latter case to keep them unsheathed and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof."

Then there may be seen Washington's flute, his hunting horn, a huge key to the Bastile, a rug woven by

When Candles were kept burning

order of Louis XVI, and sent by him as a present to General Washington. The library and numerous pieces of furniture, including his desk, chair, books, letters and records in his handwriting, a globe containing old

maps of the world, his surveyor's tripod, tables, clocks, carpets and wearing apparel, lend their touch of interest to the rooms.

LaFayette was assigned a chamber at Mount Vernon, where he stayed much of his time, and among his many gifts are the artistic firedogs to be seen in the banquet hall.

The original plantation consisted of 8,000 acres, and of this 237.5 acres are re-

Ceiling Decoration by Washington

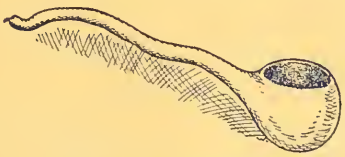
tained in the present estate. The flower gardens, which are kept up as they were designed by Martha Washington, the original hedge surrounding it and set out under the direction of Washington himself, the paths, roadways, boat landing, and a thousand possessions and reminders of the Washington family, perform their silent part in supplying the satisfaction that drops its mantle about the pilgrims to Mount Vernon.

But quite naturally the things that stood most for the personal comfort and affected the manner of living of the Washington family, afford particular interest. In

Washington's Seal—the design of which suggested the American flag

Washington's Seal---the design of
which suggested the American flag

a spacious kitchen at Mount Vernon there remain the relics of pioneer days. The meats for the Washington family were cooked at an open fire and turned on a "spit"; their coffee was boiled on the hearth, and their bread baked in a crude oven. Iron kettles and pots, ancient looking cooking vessels and utensils, such as could be used in a fireplace, are all well preserved. A



"Washington quenched his thirst from a gourd"

Brass Warming Pan

piggin, which answered the uses of a pail, is an interesting relic. A beautiful brass warming pan mutely tells the story of chilly sheets and cold rooms inadequately heated by open fires.

These people never saw a modern range or a cook stove, and we can imagine that, as the icy blast drove across the Potomac, George and Martha Washington often suffered from the cold, since they were strangers to hot-water heaters, furnaces, coal stoves, or even "air tights," which would have been a wonderful success in this region of thick woods.

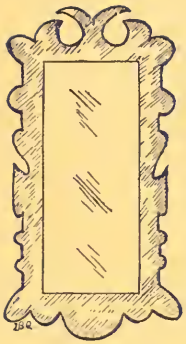
In the banquet hall a handsome Carara marble mantel surmounts the fireplace, and the story that goes with it relates to the manner of its gift by Samuel Vaughn of London, who sent it on a

sailing vessel to Alexandria, Virginia, a few miles from Mount Vernon. There it remained until Spring, for Washington wrote that the wagon roads were rough and out of repair, and the river frozen over and navigation closed. Today an electric line runs through Alexandria to the gate of Mount Vernon, and the steamboats land at the wharf. The relic of lighting in Washington's day, to be seen in the kitchen, is a set of old molds used in the making of tallow candles.

The voices hush as the visitors, passing through the mansion, stop before a chamber door over which there is

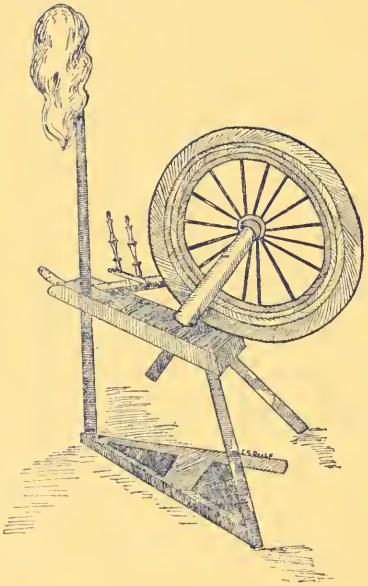
"Martha" - a name beloved

"Martha" — a name beloved



A Mirror

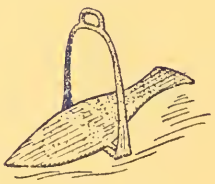
an inscription saying that Washington died in that room. The original bed, six and a half feet long, and the same width, with its four high posts and canopy, is of unusual interest, for on it the great and good man died. His mother's desk and arm-chair, a military trunk of ancient construction, a



"Material was prepared for clothing"

bureau, washstand and mirror, all used by Washington, are in place. It is sad to be reminded that Washington was likely bled to death by old-fashioned attendants and physicians, for it was the custom in those days to bleed for fever, and the popular remedies were lances and calomel. It was three days before the news reached Philadelphia, for this was in 1799, and there was no telegraph service to carry the news, no cable to flash a bulletin across the ocean, no nearby wireless as at present to carry the sad message to the then unheard of stations at Panama and San Fran-

cisco; there were no telephones, and messengers scoured the country on horseback to bring the physicians to the bedside of America's greatest man in the critical hour of his illness. And when the summons did arrive there were no swift-running automobiles to speed the men of presumed science to the side of the sick man. Washington, who lay in his room and gazed out over the Poto-



A Stirrup

"Washington . . . gazed out over the Potomac"

"Washington gazed out
over the Potomac"

mac, never dreamed that some day the very movements and actions of illustrious men like himself would be preserved to posterity by means of the moving picture.

In passing I want to mention the wide variations in likenesses shown of Washington in the best pictures at Mount Vernon. Gilbert Stuart appears to have done justice to his subject, and his "Unfinished Portrait," now preserved in Boston, greatly pleased Washington, and he authorized Stuart to make copies from it. Seven copies were made, and one of these hangs in the banquet hall at Mount Vernon. But the

The Colonial Way

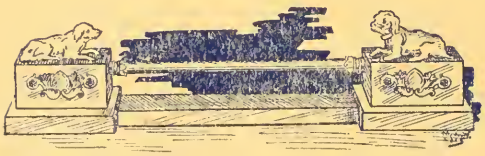
original, the "Unfinished Portrait," was never delivered to Washington.

Houdon, the French sculptor, labored conscientiously to get a life mask of Washington, and finally succeeded. From clay gathered at Mount Vernon, combined with plaster of paris, he made a bust of the neck and head of Washington. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association succeeded by great effort in preserving this wonderful work of art, after it had begun to crumble. It is in a glass case in the banquet hall, and shows Washington as a man of very strong features—quite the ideal type accepted by

those who have studied the varying pictures and busts of General Washington.

Houdon returned to Europe with his life mask, and afterwards there appeared statues and busts purporting to have been made with this life mask as the model. One of these is at Richmond, another in the National Capitol—but they are all untrue to the original, and to the Stuart portraits.

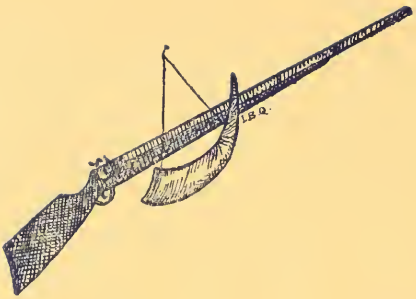
Other artists have suc-



Firedogs Presented to Washington by LaFayette

ceeded in creating sketches typifying a fine-skinned unwrinkled face, to which they have added a fluffily clothed body, crowning the creations with a bewigged head on which a number five hat would fit with nicety. In the paintings and statues in the Hall of Fame at the National Capitol, in the Boston Public Library and the City Hall of New York, I have seen these same elaborate misrepresentations.

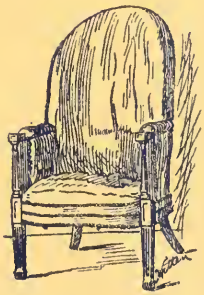
Unfortunately some of this work is credited to the Houdon life mask, but go to Mount Vernon and see for yourself and you will be convinced that the great



sculptor is to be held blameless for the libels upon his work.

A good picture of Washington, in his last years, hangs in the old Masonic lodge room at Alexandria, Virginia. General Washington was master of the Alexandria Lodge, and approved the portrait which hangs on the wall. It was produced by Williams, an obscure artist who lived in Philadelphia. In

this hall there are preserved many interesting Washington relics, including his Master Mason's apron, and the chair in which he sat as master. There is also the trowel used by General Washington in laying the cornerstone of the National Capitol, his spurs, pocket compass, the lesser lights and the hour glass of the lodge.



"The chair in which he sat as master"

And lastly, let us climb to the attic on the third floor of the mansion at Mount Vernon, for here we find the room in which Martha Washington spent her last days and died. A chair, dressing glass, desk and dressing set are among the original relics to be found in this room. Only a small, narrow window lets in the light. Here the great wife of America's first President spent her days in comparative solitude; for, although it is one of the least desirable rooms in the mansion, the tomb, where her husband's body rested, lay in plain view beneath the window, and

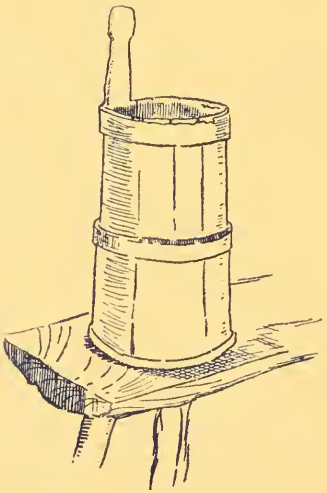
And his countrymen erected a great
monument to his lasting memory

And his countrymen erected a great monument to his lasting memory

faithful Martha Washington kept her eyes fastened upon that spot until Time closed her own lids and she was carried out to be laid by the side of her husband and lover.

The picture of Mount Vernon can never be drawn by artist and writer except inadequately, but as time goes on thousands of American citizens visiting the place will feel the rich benefits which I have so poorly expressed. That this privilege is preserved for them is due to the fact that when the place was run down, when it was going to rack and ruin, and when the government itself had

failed to rise to the occasion and take charge of the sacred spot; after old Virginia had turned its back upon its responsibility of caring for the greatest landmark within its borders, Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham of South Caro-



"The piggin, which answered the uses of a pail"

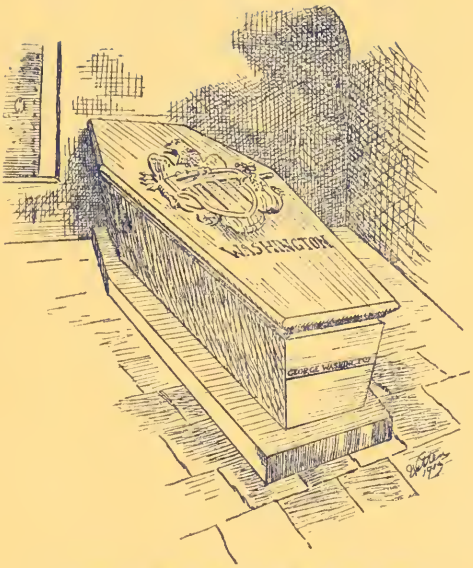
Washington's Book Plate

lina undertook to organize the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association; and the story of her struggles through long years, during all of which time she was in an invalid condition, is a chapter in womanly heroism and devotion to a self-enforced duty that furnished as its unselfish reward the preservation of the Washington Mansion,

when otherwise the chances were that it would have crumbled to decay.

One of the tasks was to raise more than $200,000 by public subscription, and $68,294.59 of this amount was secured by Hon. Edward Everett of Massachusetts, who lectured throughout the country.

Once in awhile some Congressman asks for "an investigation of Mount Vernon," or presents a resolution for the government to purchase the place; but when these same statesmen find out how much better the ladies have done with their charge than the government is doing with



"You eagerly bend forward to behold the caskets"

anything in its care, they usually end their interference by commending these noble women, representing many states, who have done such a valuable service to their country, through their custody and management of every patriotic American's shrine—Mount Vernon.

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